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THE BALLAD-BOOK.

CHILDREN'S BALLADS

FROM HISTORY AND FOLK LORE

BY

MRS. CLARA DOTY BATES, SUSAN COOLIDGE, MRS. LOUISA T. CRAIGIN, EDITH W. COOK, MRS. FRANCES A. HUMPHREY, MRS. EMMA HUNTINGTON NASON, MRS. MARGARET J. PRESTON, AND MARY E. WILKINS

EIGHTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS BY

E. H. GARRETT, G. F. BARNES, AND JESSIE McDERMOTT

BOSTON

D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY

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I.

THE COCK-HORSE REGIMENT.

An Incident of the "Thirty Years' War."

The Cockhorse Regiment.

BY

Frances A. Humphrey

PROUDLY placed among her meadows,
With the Pegnitz winding near,
Proudest of all German cities —
Nuremberg, without her peer.

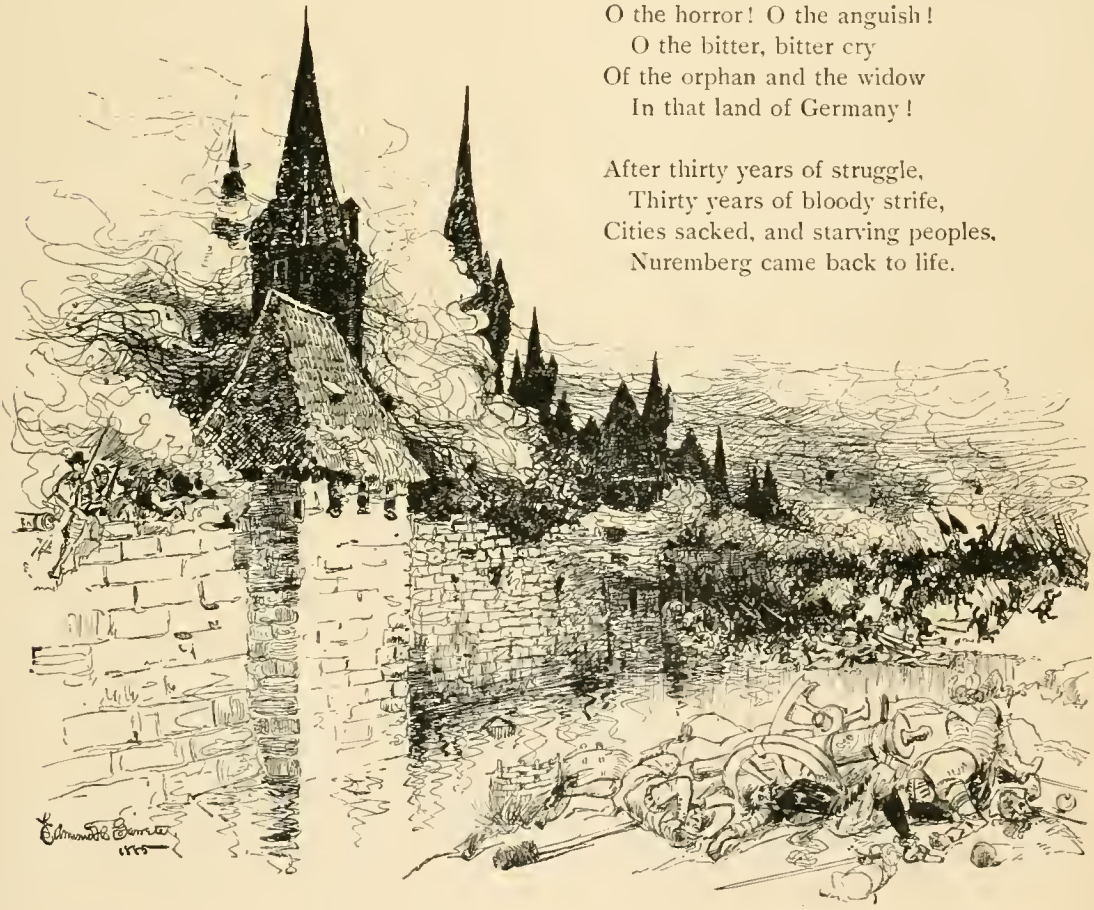
Nuremberg the free and mighty:
Nuremberg, whose busy hand
"Goeth," saith her ancient rhymster,
"Far and wide through every land."

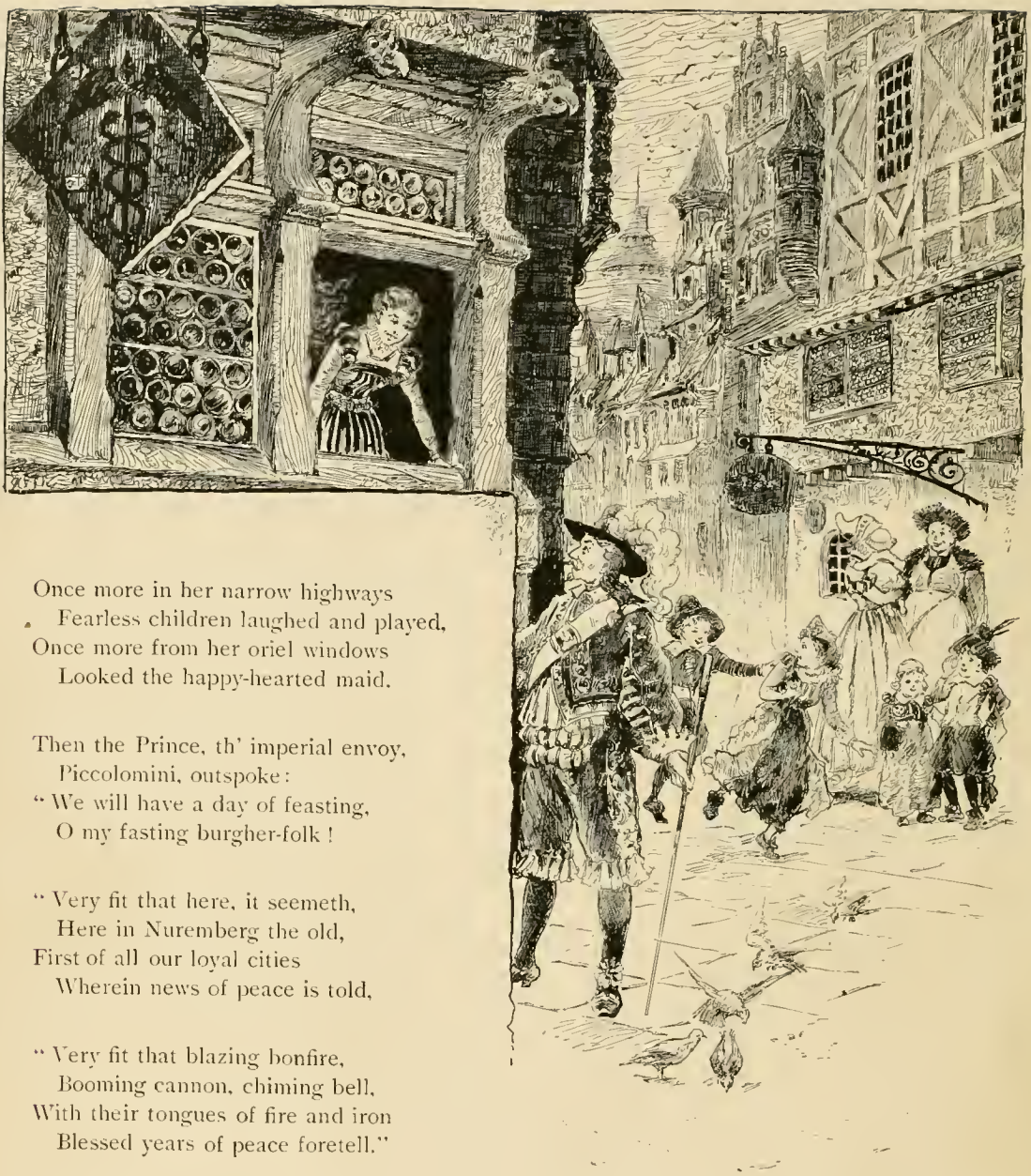
Vainly Waldstein's cannon thundered
'Gainst the city, tower-walled,
Vainly hurled he his battalions,
Vainly for surrender called.

But her people died by thousands
In the close beleaguered town,
And her women prayed while swiftly
Ran the tears their cheeks adown.

O the horror! O the anguish!
O the bitter, bitter cry
Of the orphan and the widow
In that land of Germany!

After thirty years of struggle,
Thirty years of bloody strife,
Cities sacked, and starving peoples,
Nuremberg came back to life.





Once more in her narrow highways
  Fearless children laughed and played,
Once more from her oriel windows
  Looked the happy-hearted maid.

Then the Prince, th' imperial envoy,
  Piccolomini, outspoke:
"We will have a day of feasting,
  O my fasting burgher-folk!

"Very fit that here, it seemeth,
  Here in Nuremberg the old,
First of all our loyal cities
  Wherein news of peace is told,

"Very fit that blazing bonfire,
  Booming cannon, chiming bell,
With their tongues of fire and iron
  Blessed years of peace foretell."

As the Prince, so said the people.
  Glad they gathered on that day —
July day — in sixteen hundred
  Fifty — mark the year, I pray.

For from ashes of war's fires
  Smoldering then upon the earth,
Phœnix-like, the German Nation
  Dates her happy birth.

Gladly forth from every quarter,
  Soldier, burgher, all outpour,
Marching in strait ranks and serried,
  Marching on from door to door;

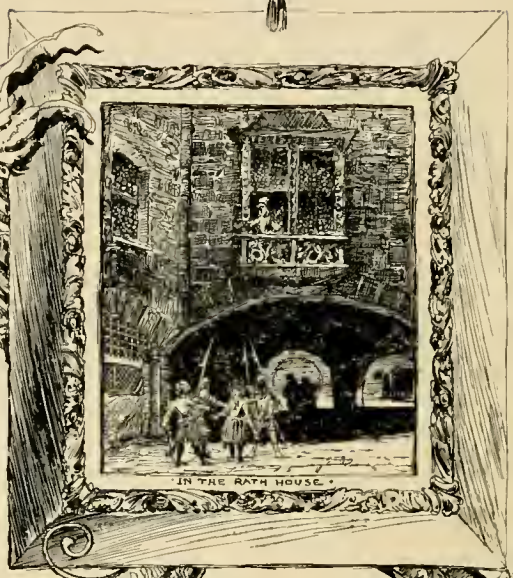
Bearing silken standards, crimson,
  Gold, of Nurembergan blue
Famous as the Tyrian purple,
  — As 'tis told I tell it you —

Bearing banks of spears uplifted,
  Treading sturdily alway,
Guild on guild, the cobbler, blacksmith —
  None were wanting on that day.

None? No — think you little children
  Failed to lend their piquant grace
To their country's pageant? Doubter!
  They too had their time and place.

In among the moving column,
  Heads erect and eyes intent,
Gallantly, most gallantly,
  Marched the Cock-Horse Regiment!

Clad in royal Genoa velvets,
  Ostrich plumes, and Flanders lace,
Gems that sparkled as they rode by
  — Children of patrician race



Side by side with peasants sturdy,
  Each boy waving with a toss
High in air his cutlass tiny,
  Each upon his hobby-horse.

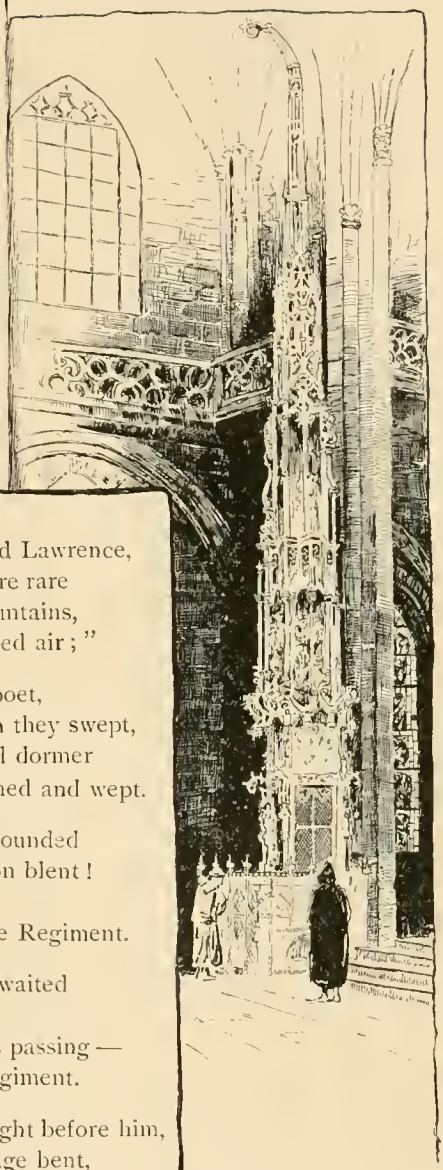
So on swept the grand procession
  Past the castle where now stands
As then stood the lofty linden
  Set by Kunigunde's hands;

Past the house where Dürer painted,
  Where with patient skill he wrought,
Drew his wondrous "Burgomaster."
  Truth and reverence in his thought;

(There still stands his ancient tombstone,
  Emigravit carved thereon;
"Gone, not dead," the legend runneth —
  Nuremberg's own dearest son.)

Past the high and stately Rath-Haus,
  With its dungeons dark and deep,
With its dreadful torture-chamber,
  Torture that did murder sleep;

Past the peasants' well-beloved —
  "Little Goose-man" is his name —
Flowing fountain, geese and goose-man,
  Still beloved, and known to fame.



THE PYX

Past the church of martyred Lawrence,
  With its pyx of "sculpture rare
Like the foamy sheaf of fountains,
  Rising through the painted air;"

Past the house of cobbler-poet,
  Hans-Sachs — on and on they swept,
While from gable, door and dormer
  Women looked and laughed and wept.

O right loud the trumpets sounded
  With the booming cannon blent!
Gallantly, most gallantly,
  Marched the Cock-Horse Regiment.

At the Red Horse Hostel waited
  Piccolomini, content;
Saw the marching columns passing —
  Saw the Cock-Horse Regiment.

Cried out "Halt!" And right before him,
  With each head in homage bent,
Cutlass lowered, war-horse rearing,
  Stood the Cock-Horse Regiment.

Then in gracious accents speaking:
  "My wish is, and my intent,
That once more shall march before me
  This brave Cock-Horse Regiment."

So again in later summer,
  Proudly, as before, they went;
Banners flying, steeds a-prancing,
  Marched the Cock-Horse Regiment.

At the Red Horse Hostel halting,
  Piccolomini the Prince
Gave to each a silver medal,
  For them cast and graven since

Last they stood there; and on one side,
  In the silver bedded fine,
Austria's eagle, double-headed —
  Empire's signet — they saw shine.

On the obverse — ah! how proudly
  Went up each head with a toss
As the eyes of each boy fell on
  Himself on his hobby-horse!

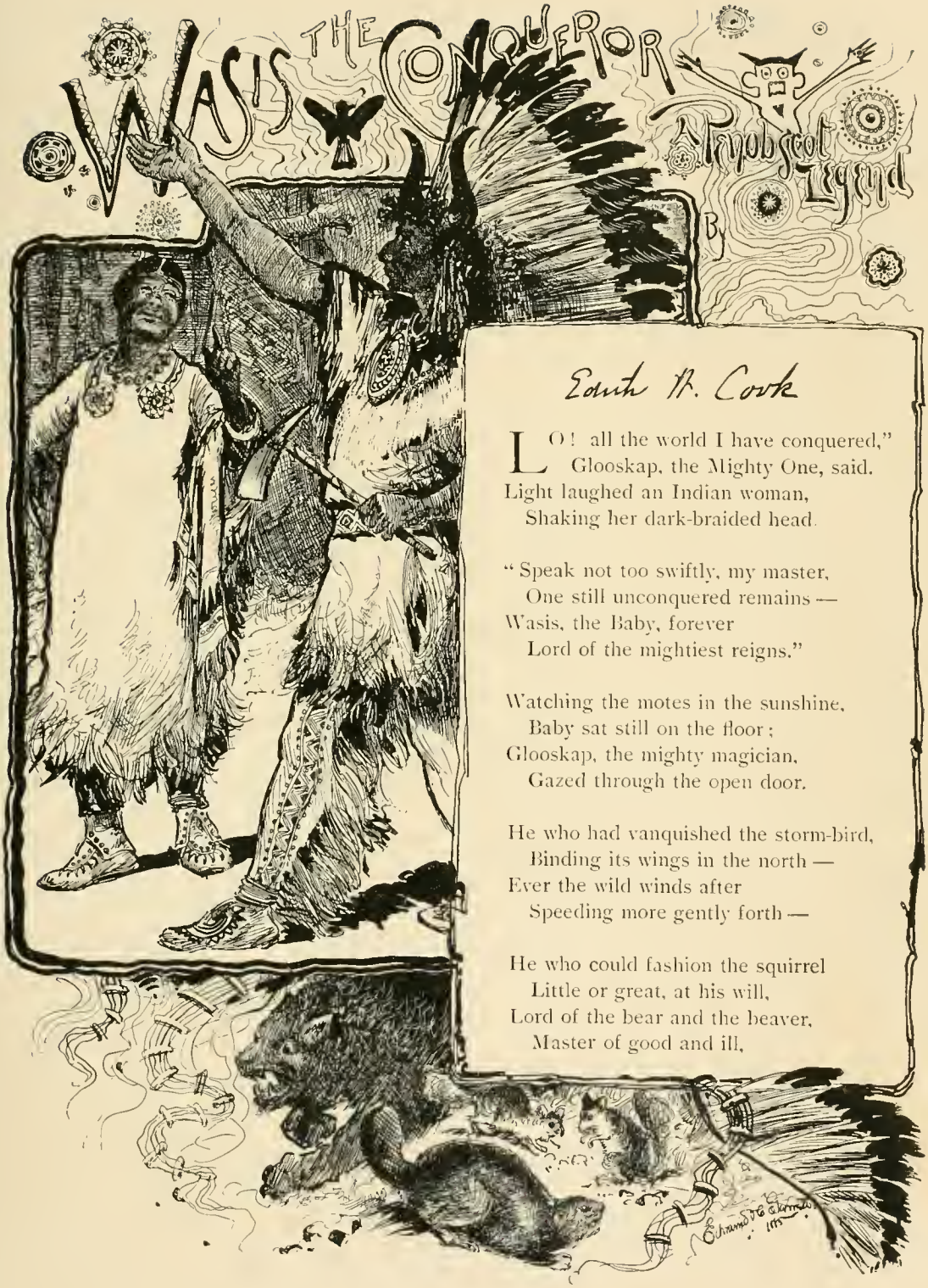
Vivat Ferdinando III! — 'twas
  Thus thereon the legend read;
Long may live the Roman Empire!
  — Empire long, now long since dead.

So with cheers and loud huzza-ings,
  Heads erect and eyes intent,
On their prancing steeds away then
  Marched the Cock-Horse Regiment.

II.

WASIS, THE CONQUEROR.

An Algonquin Legend.



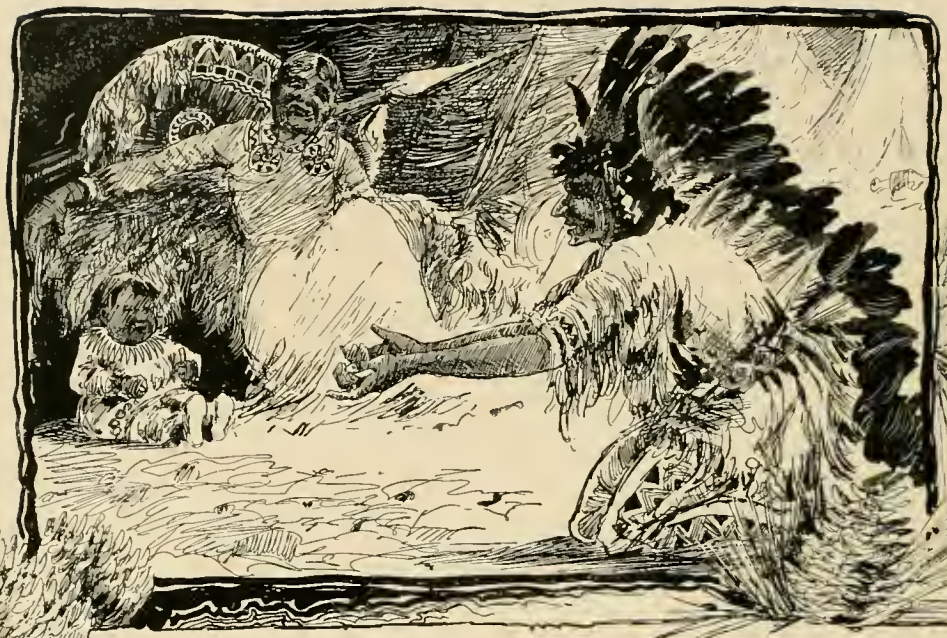
"LO! all the world I have conquered,"
Glooskap, the Mighty One, said.
Light laughed an Indian woman,
Shaking her dark-braided head.

"Speak not too swiftly, my master,
One still unconquered remains —
Wasis, the Baby, forever
Lord of the mightiest reigns."

Watching the motes in the sunshine,
Baby sat still on the floor;
Glooskap, the mighty magician,
Gazed through the open door.

He who had vanquished the storm-bird,
Binding its wings in the north —
Ever the wild winds after
Speeding more gently forth —

He who could fashion the squirrel
Little or great, at his will,
Lord of the bear and the beaver,
Master of good and ill,



Gazed at the wonderful Baby
  Watching the dancing gold,
Wondered what magical weapon
  Little brown fingers could hold.

Happy of heart in the sunshine,
  Wasis, the wonderful Child,
Sucking the sweets of the maple,
  Looked at the stranger and smiled.

Glooskap, the mighty magician,
  Wife had known never, nor child,
Knew not the heart's tender watchwords
  Wherewith caresses are wiled;

Softly he smiled at the Baby,
  Bidding him, gently, come nigh.
Wasis stirred not from the sunshine,
  Watching the motes dance by.

Sweet, then, as 'mid summer forest
  Singeth the wee winter wren,
Spoke unto Wasis, the Strong One,
  Master of beasts and men.

Unto the Master's eyes lifted
  Wondering eyes of the child —
Moved in the sunshine no shadow,
  Wasis sat silent and smiled.

Then, with a voice as of thunder,
  Under a terrible frown —
From the fir-trees of the forest
  Falling the brown cones down —

Glooskap, the mighty magician,
  Spoke his command o'er and o'er.
Neither the sunshine nor shadow
  Changed on the lodge's bare floor.

But from the brown eyes of Wasis
  Rolled the great tears to the floor,
Rose from the red lips, wide-parted,
  Mighty-voiced, heart-piercing roar.

Glooskap, the slayer of beaver,
  Wondering, e'er, more and more,
Wove all the spells of his magic
  Wasis, the unsubdued, o'er;

Singing the strange, wild music
  Wherewith he conjured the dead,
Wherewith the dark-hearted spirits
  Up from their caverns he led.

Smooth grew the cheeks of the Baby,
  Dry the bright tears in his eyes;
Merriest playfellow Glooskap
  Seemed unto Wasis, the wise.

Who, as the magic grew wilder,
  Still by each spell unbeguiled,
Sucking his sweet maple sugar,
  Looked at the great chief and smiled.

Glooskap, well weary with struggle,
  Sat in the low lodge door;
Moved not the shadow of Wasis
  Over the sunlit floor.

Round the red lips of the Baby
  Ripples of laughter o'erflowed;
Gazed he, admiring, at Glooskap,
  Goo-goo-ed, and lustily crowed!

Vain was the strength of the giant;
  Never a spell could bind
Wasis, the unconquered Baby,
  Stronger than sun or wind.

"Well spake the Indian woman."
  Thoughtfully, Glooskap spoke,
Kindling his pipe while the Baby
  Smiled at the curling smoke;

"Though of the world I am master,
  One still unconquered remains,
Wasis, the Baby, forever
  Master of Glooskap reigns."

Still know the Indian women
  Wasis, the wonderful Child,
And, when the Baby cries *goo-goo*,
  Unto contentment beguiled,

Crowing, none knowing the reason,
  Softly they say: "Through his thought
Runneth the time when o'er Glooskap
  Mightiest conquest he wrought."

So, since the world had beginning
  Nothing unconquered remains
Save only Wasis, the Baby —
  Home's little master he reigns.

III.

LITTLE URSEL'S MOTHERING SUNDAY.

An old English Folk-Observance.

Little Ursel's Mothering Sunday.

By Susan Coolidge.

THE long day's tasks were neatly done,
The milk pail scoured, the milk set by,
And Ursel at the set of sun
Stood wistfully her mistress nigh.

The Dame was stern, the Dame was shrewd,
So all the neighbors were agreed,
Thrifty and sharp in word and mood,
But kindly still and just of deed.

She glanced at Ursel's braided hair,
She watched the color come and flit
On the young cheek so round and fair,
And well she knew the cause of it.

And smiling at the little maid,
"You have worked well and had no play,
And been a steady lass," she said,
"Now you shall have a holiday.

"To-morrow Mothering Sunday is
When children to their parents go,
Each with a gift for her, or his,
And you shall have a gift also.

"The small round cheese I bade you make,
The pat of butter on the shelf,
The crusty loaf you saw me bake —
These you shall carry home yourself.

"I mind me how, a lass like you
With such a basket on my arm,
I hied me home, as you shall do
On Mothering Day, to the old farm.

"And how my mother — rest her soul!
She has been dead these forty years" —
The Dame's voice shook beyond control,
She could not see the fire for tears.

But little Ursel's cheeks were red,
Her heart was bounding light and gay;
"Oh, thank you, thank you, Dame," she said,
And quietly she stole away.

The morning's dawn was clear and fair,
And Ursel rose before the sun;
She neatly bound her long bright hair,
And did her morning tasks, each one.

She made her ready for the road,
She tied her shoes and Sunday hat,
And in a basket she bestowed
The bread-loaf and the butter-pat.

The Dame at window overhead
Watched the girl go with joyous speed;
"Mothers are happy folk," she said,
"Mothers are lucky folk indeed."

Across the moor four distant miles,
At the same time a lad set forth,
With clean-washed face all lit with smiles;
He headed south and Ursel north.

His holiday was hard to gain,
His surly master cared no whit
For Mothering Sunday, and in vain
The boy had urged his wish for it;

Until at last the farmer's wife,
With pity touched, had won consent;
And glad as never in his life
The shepherd boy arose and went.

He bore no gift, poor little lad,
His wage was naught but clothes and food,
But mother would, he knew, be glad,
And count his coming as a good.

Northward ran Ursel o'er the fell,
Southward the shepherd fleeter yet,
And half-way by a roadside well
The brother and the sister met.

Both clapped their hands in gladsome wise;
Long months had, since they met, gone by;
Tears shone in Ursel's happy eyes,
But manly Robin scorned to cry.

"Have you no gift for mother brought?"
She asked; her brother shook his head;
"Nothing with nothing can be bought,
How could I bring one?" Robin said.

"You shall share mine then," Ursel cried,
"It shall be gift from both us twain."
And hand in hand, and side by side,
They hastened on their way again.

They danced adown the lower hill,
Threaded the copse and crossed the brook,
'Till Ursel suddenly stood still,
Crying, "O Robin! Robin! Look!"

There, in a sheltered hollow set,
Couched shyly by a mossy stone,
They saw the earliest violet
All purple sweet and fully blown.

"Your gift?" she cried, "and best of all,
The proverb runs, that you could bring:
It says that 'Violets shall befall
Him who shall go a-mothering!'"

Their mother at the doorway stood,
  Her hearth was swept all cleanly bright,
She looked to moor, she looked to wood,
  Shading her eyes against the light.

She saw the youthful figures dawn
  Dark shapes against the shining sky,
And as they rapidly came on
  Contentment filled the mother's eye;

And it was, "You have grown, my lass,"
  And it was, "welcome home, dear lad,"
As laughing, chattering, in they pass
  With lightsome steps and kisses glad.

The yellow simnels shone like gold,
  The frumenty was spiced and hot,
The children feasted as of old,
  The mother too — though eating not.

Ah! sweet old Mothering Holiday
  Which bound the ties of kindred fast,
Lost and forgotten in our day —
  What pity that it could not last!

IV.

KING ROBERT'S BOWL.

A Story of "The Bruce."

KING ROBERT'S BOWL

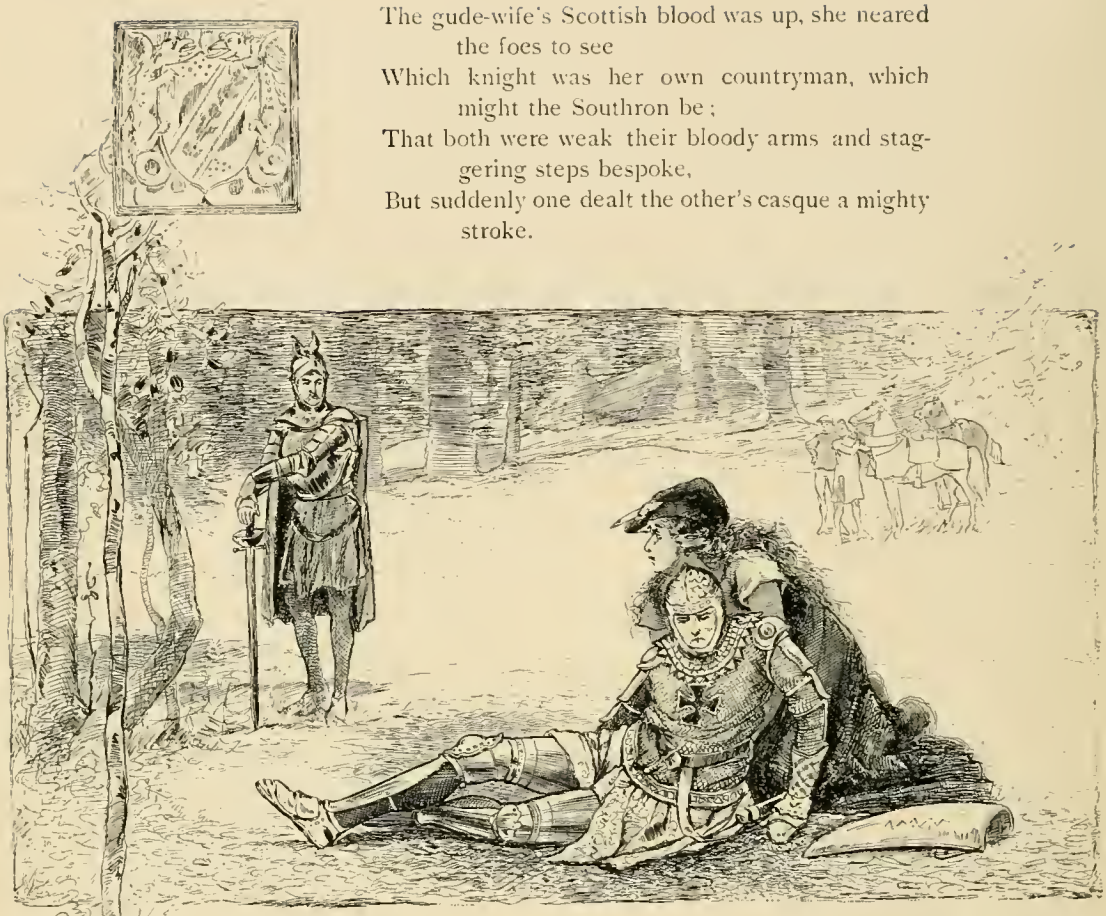
Clara Doty Bates

THE dews lay chill upon the banks of Urr in Galloway;
The shepherd and his sons were out at earliest peep of day;
And on the cottage fire the gude-wife stirred the butter-brose,
Though scarce had dawn along the east tinted the sky with rose.

Close by upon the river's bank she heard a clash and clang;
Ah! well she knew the deadly sound, and to her doorway sprang;
There two armed knights in furious strife made desperate thrust and pass,
While near two stalwart warriors lay lifeless on the grass.

(It was the time when Robert Bruce, though Scotland's crowned lord,
Was driven his own realm about by Edward's envious sword —
Five centuries and more ago — and oft the dreary heath
Saw lonely battles, hand to hand, end in some lonely death.)

The gude-wife's Scottish blood was up, she neared the foes to see
Which knight was her own countryman, which might the Southron be;
That both were weak their bloody arms and staggering steps bespoke,
But suddenly one dealt the other's casque a mighty stroke.



He fell; and from the broken helmet strayed a lock of hair,
'Twas English hair—she knew 'twas English—long and very fair;
Quickly she ran and seized the lock, held so he could not stir,
And claimed he yield himself at once conquered and prisoner.

With faint voice then the standing knight, as if in half excuse,
Spake: "Not so long had he withstood the arm of Robert Bruce,
Had I not been for two whole days without a taste of food."
At this his royal limbs half bent beneath him as he stood.

Then Lisbeth knew this was her king, and cried as she arose;
"He hails you king, else I throw on him boiling butter-brose."
"Nay," quoth the king, "your victory, gude-wife, is so complete
Far better give two starving men your butter-brose to eat."

They entered the low cottage door — the prisoner and the king —
And Lisbeth made all haste a huge great bowl to fill and bring ;
But first she locked up all her spoons, within an oaken chest,
Except one only ; that she placed before her royal guest.

" No Southron shall taste bit or drop beneath my roof," she cried.
Her fiery zeal amused the king, who generously replied,
" Brave dame, thou knowest this land is mine, the hill beyond is fair ;
The valley in front is fertile — see, thy sheep are cropping there ;

" Well, I will make thee lady of all that with thy nimble feet
Thou canst run round at thy best pace while I my breakfast eat."
She bound her hair about her head, stood poised as if for flight,
" Now, woman's speed," cried Robert Bruce, " 'gainst a king's appetite ! "

Away she sped ; the track about the hill was stony and rough ;
She heeded not ; to her it seemed easy and smooth enough.
On, on, through dew and drench, until she neared her home once more,
And paused a moment on the step to peep within the door.

And there the king and vanquished knight, helmets and swords off, ate
Her porridge, sharing bowl and spoon between them alternate.
" Fair play, my liege, fair play ! " she cried, and even while he heard,
Was off again, round farm and field, swift as a homeward bird.

And to this day in Galloway they hold that royal dole,
But keep as their best heritage King Robert Bruce's bowl.

The bowl was large, a single spoon made chivalrous eating slow;
And Lisbeth's feet were fleet as long as she might choose to go.
Far, far! the circuit that she made wide acres did enclose,
While Scot and Southron changed about the spoon and butter-brose.

And when along the flaming east the fires of sunrise burned,
And the gude-wife with drabbled limbs and scant of breath returned,
The bowl was empty 'tween the two; quoth Robert Bruce to her,
"My loyal dame, when Scottish kings shall pass the river Urr

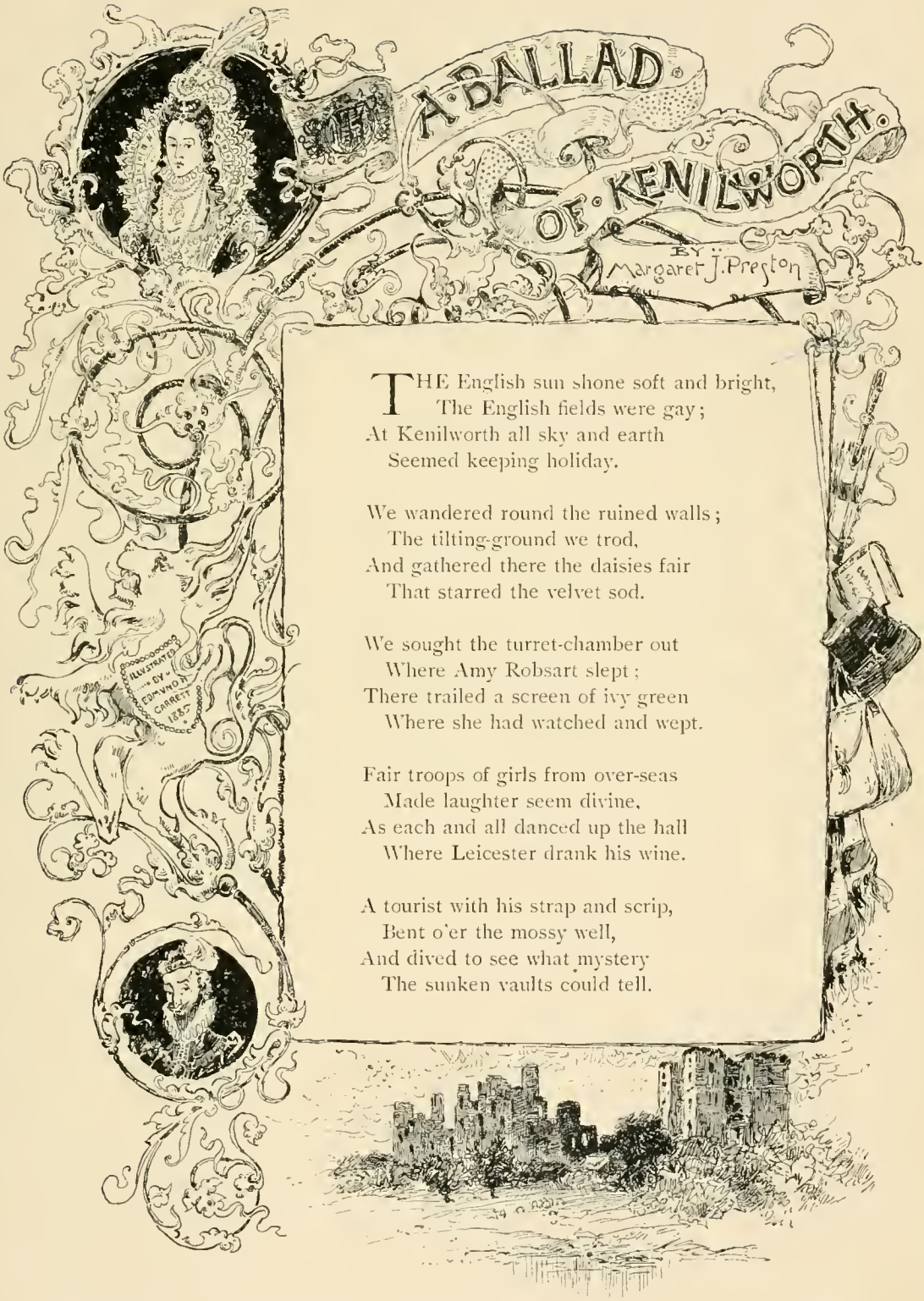
"Hereafter, let their sovereign pride honor a steadfast soul
By eating peasant butter-brose out of King Robert's bowl.
Be it kept precious, passing down through children's children's hands,
As, free from fee or tithe, they hold thy valorously-earned lands.

"Thine, rendered as thy king's own gift, thine and thy heirs, as long
As lives the name of Robert Bruce in story or in song."

V.

A BALLAD OF KENILWORTH.

A Souvenir of Sir Walter Scott.



THE English sun shone soft and bright,
The English fields were gay;
At Kenilworth all sky and earth
Seemed keeping holiday.

We wandered round the ruined walls;
The tilting-ground we trod,
And gathered there the daisies fair
That starred the velvet sod.

We sought the turret-chamber out
Where Amy Robsart slept;
There trailed a screen of ivy green
Where she had watched and wept.

Fair troops of girls from over-seas
Made laughter seem divine,
As each and all danced up the hall
Where Leicester drank his wine.

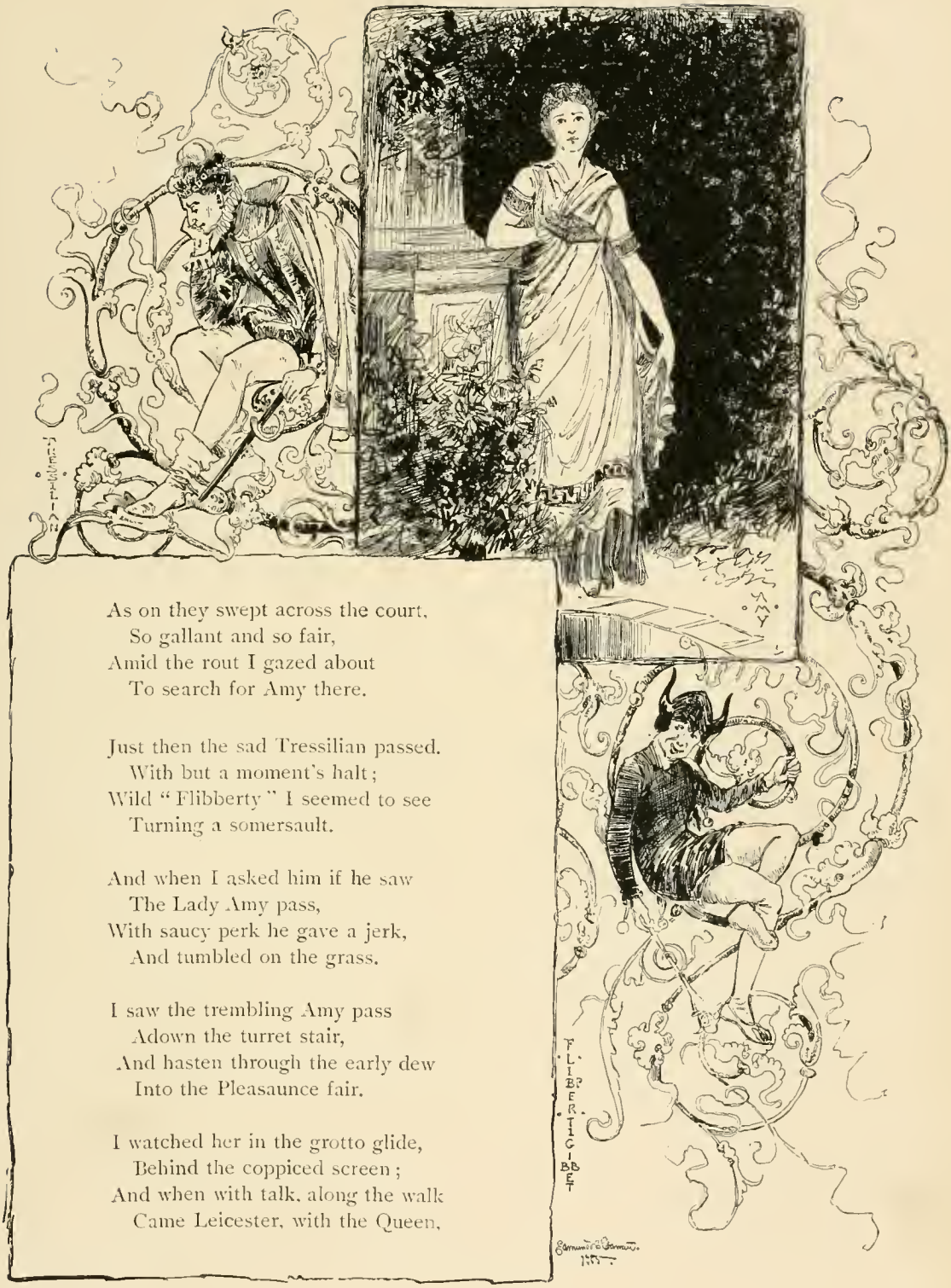
A tourist with his strap and scrip,
Bent o'er the mossy well,
And dived to see what mystery
The sunken vaults could tell.

A gray-haired wanderer sat and mused,
With chin upon his staff;
A spiral stair, that led nowhere,
Sent back a schoolboy's laugh.

I sat apart with brooding eyes,
And introspective thought;
And sweet and clear, now far, now near,
A bugle's sound I caught.

A heard the din of arquebus,
The trampling cavalcade,
The clash and clank of chain and plank,
The lowering drawbridge made.

And in I saw the proud Queen Bess
Upon her palfrey ride,
And Leicester dight like royal knight,
Careering at her side.



As on they swept across the court,
  So gallant and so fair,
Amid the rout I gazed about
  To search for Amy there.

Just then the sad Tressilian passed,
  With but a moment's halt;
Wild "Flibberty" I seemed to see
  Turning a somersault.

And when I asked him if he saw
  The Lady Amy pass,
With saucy perk he gave a jerk,
  And tumbled on the grass.

I saw the trembling Amy pass
  Adown the turret stair,
And hasten through the early dew
  Into the Pleasaunce fair.

I watched her in the grotto glide,
  Behind the coppiced screen;
And when with talk, along the walk
  Came Leicester, with the Queen,

— A girl as fair as Amy's self,
  Here broke upon my trance,
And put to rout with merry shout
  My vision of romance.

"Why! we've been wandering up and down,
  And searching for an hour;
And find you now asleep, I vow,
  In Amy Robsart's Tower!"

Her mirthful voice dissolved the spell
  (More potent than the Earl's),
And looking round, I only found
  A band of saucy girls.

The sun was hastening down the west,
  And from the crannied nooks
I heard the caws of noisy daws,
  And saw the wheeling rooks.

But on Sir Walter's pictured page
  Sweet Amy does not seem
To walk again in life, as when
  She crossed my waking dream.

VI.

THE MISSION TEA-PARTY.

A Souvenir of Havelock and Lucknow.

THE war in the East had ended;
Its terrors were past, they said;
There was peace, once more, for the living,
And peace for the valiant dead.

Through the splendid squares of Lucknow
The Highlanders marched again;
The heroes of fortress and jungle,
Brave Havelock's peerless men!

Ay! open your gates, O Lucknow! —
But measure, ye guards, your breath,
As ye think of those days, an hundred,
When Havelock marched with death.

They had freed the beleaguered city,
Fought step by step through the vale;
And swept from the shore of the Ganges
Forever the Sepoy's trail.

Then welcome them back with rejoicing,
O minaret, tower and shrine!
For these are the men who saved you,
Whose glory outlasteth thine!

Through the streets swept the colors of England,
Borne proudly aloft on the air;
While the "throne land of Rama" re-echoed
The Christian's thanksgiving and prayer.

Of the pain, the hunger, the thirsting,
The death in the jungle's gloom;
The rescue of woman and children,
Threatened with direful doom.

And blithest of all were the pipers,
Their tartan plaids streaming in pride,
As they woke, on the banks of the Goomtee,
The airs of the Doon and Clyde.

Then the heart of one beautiful woman
Was stirred by an impulse sweet,
As she thought of the long, forced marches,
The weary and blood-stained feet;

And she said, "I will spread them a banquet,
With a touch of the homeland cheer,
And the welcome their mothers would give them,
Afar in the heatherlands dear.

"Not for twice twelve months have they tasted
A simple cupful of tea!
I will serve it to-day for the heroes
Who periled their lives for me!

"Bid them come to the courts of the Mission!"
Gay awnings were hastily hung;
While on tripods of curious fashion,
The teakettles merrily swung;

Swung and sung songs of the homeland;
Familiar and sweet were the tunes,
As if winds of the loch and the mountain
Blew soft through the Indian noons.

At the old gray gate of the Mission,
'Neath turret and watchtowers high,
Where the dusk-eyed Indian Princess
Had dreamed in the days gone by,

She fastened the tartan of Scotland
With the thistle-bloom over her breast;
And her own little winsome daughter
In the bonny bright plaid she drest.

This fair-faced, brave-hearted woman,
A stranger from lands of the West,
To the ancient palace and gardens
Welcomed each war-worn guest.

And with Highland bonnets uplifted,
There under the Hindoo palm,
The soldiers of Havelock listened
To the Hebrew's glorious psalm:

Served with the grace and the bounty
Of royal fête and of feast,
To the tattered and smoke-grimed heroes,
In halls of the storied East.

NOTE.—This incident was related to the author by Dr. William Butler, American Missionary in India during the Sepoy Rebellion. The event occurred when Havelock's Brigade had returned to Lucknow, to take up their line of march for the Afghan frontier.

"Thou wentest before thy people,
And kings of armies did flee!"
Then merrily under the shadows
They drank of the fragrant tea,

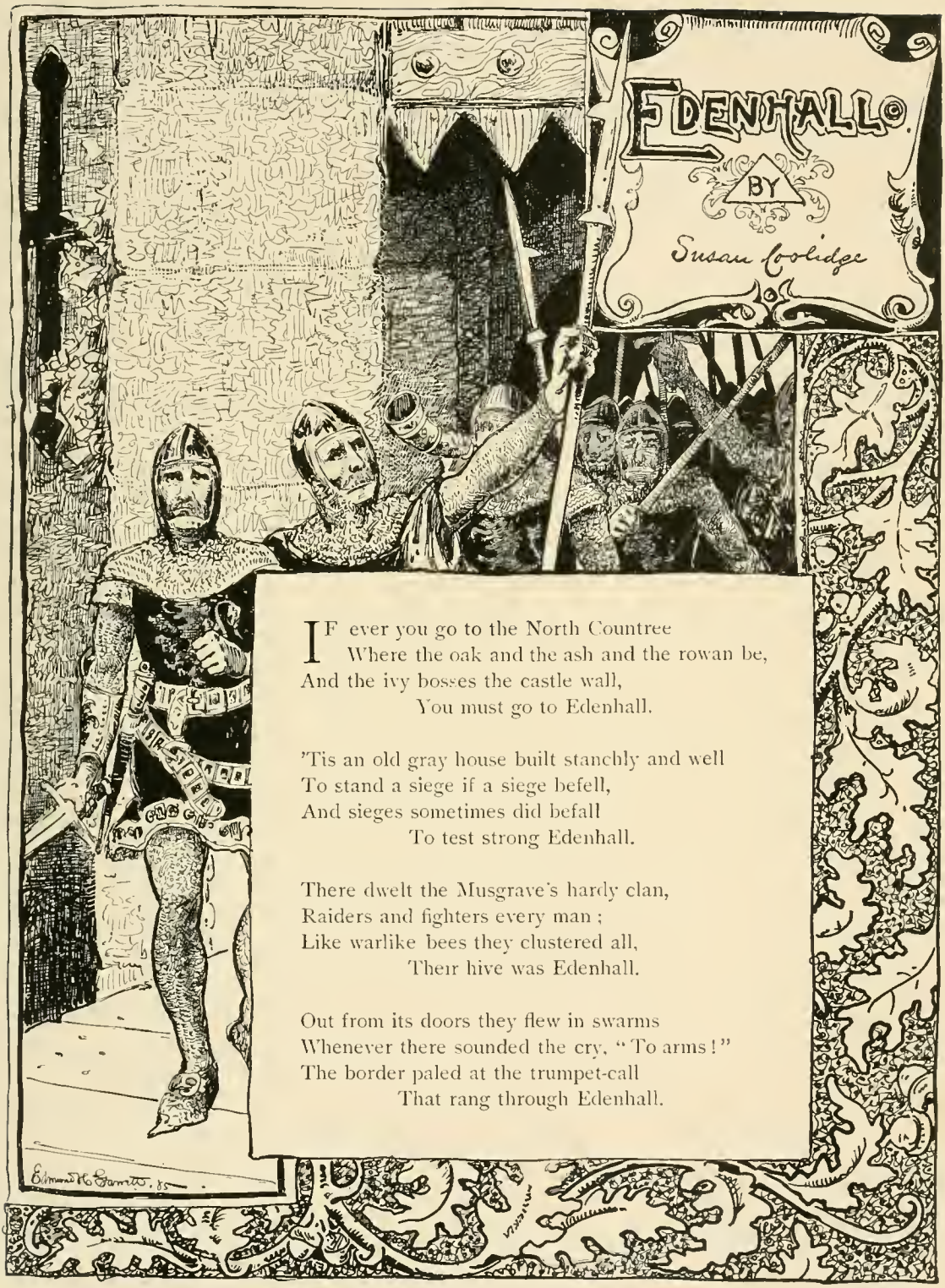
And many a battle-scarred soldier
Let fall from a glistening eye
Hot tears on the hand of his hostess
For whom he had thought to die.

And for her was the Highlander's blessing
Breathed low in that tenderer scene
When the pipers, proud in their places,
Played grandly — "God save the Queen!"

VII.

EDENHALL

A West of England Folk-Tale.



IF ever you go to the North Countree
Where the oak and the ash and the rowan be,
And the ivy bosses the castle wall,
You must go to Edenhall.

'Tis an old gray house built stanchly and well
To stand a siege if a siege befell,
And sieges sometimes did befall
To test strong Edenhall.

There dwelt the Musgrave's hardy clan,
Raiders and fighters every man;
Like warlike bees they clustered all,
Their hive was Edenhall.

Out from its doors they flew in swarms
Whenever there sounded the cry, "To arms!"
The border paled at the trumpet-call
That rang through Edenhall.

Now, when you knock at that same oak door
A sober old Goody of some threescore
Comes primly forth in a cap and shawl,
And shows you Edenhall.

Old chairs, old settles, a mighty jack
For the roasting of beeves, a dungeon black,
The heir's quaint cradle, the rusty pall
Of the Lords of Edenhall.

And chiefest of all its treasures, stands,
Safe-hidden from intermeddling hands,
In a guarded cupboard built into the wall
The "Luck" of Edenhall.

'Tis an oddly-shaped goblet, strong and thick
Enamelled by some glass-working trick
Unknown to our modern craft — that's all
This "Luck" of Edenhall.

They say it was made by the fairies' selves
And used at the banquets of the elves
When their King and their Queen held carnival
In the woods of Edenhall.

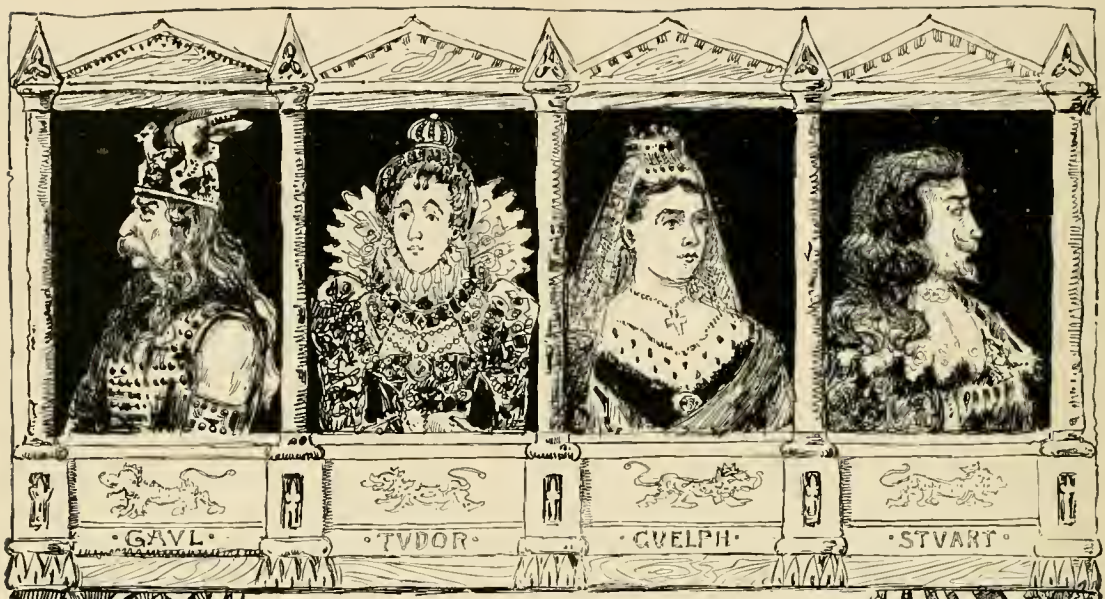
And that once a bold Musgrave lurked unseen,
And snatched the glass from the fairy-queen,
And spurred his courser fleet and tall
And sped toward Edenhall.

The furious fays pursued him in vain;
And stabbed at his horse and seized his rein,
But he leaped the brook near the rippling brawl,
And was safe in Edenhall.

And he bore in his ears this charmed song:
"Joy to thee, Knight, for thy heart is strong.
But if the goblet shall break or fall
Ill luck for Edenhall!"

So the fairy trophy is prized to this day
And the canny Scot's folk whisper and say,
"So long as no harm to the glass befall
Luck stays with Edenhall."

'Tis a whimsical fantasy to trace,
The fragile glass and the stalwart race;
But the Musgraves are "lucky" say men all
And they still own Edenhall.



And I thought, as I looked at the small, slight
thing,
Which has outlived many a mighty king,
Tudor and Stuart and Guelph and Gaul —
Still safe in Edenhall —

That, whether the fairy tale be true,
(Which I don't believe in the least, do you?)
There is this in "Luck" or what folks so call,
And not only at Edenhall —

That if we are manly and trust in ourselves,
Though holding no commerce with the elves,
And owning no fairy pledge at all,
No "glass of Edenhall,"

But do our best and our most each day,
With a heart resolved and a temper gay,
Which pleasure spoils not, nor frights appall —
Though we never see Edenhall —

We may safely count on the kindly fate
Which crowns all good work soon or late,
And be sure that a "Luck" to our lot will fall
As it has to Edenhall.

VIII.

KING OLEG'S CROWN.

A Russian Folk-Tale.

King Oleg's Crown:

By Mrs. Louise T. Craigin.

FROM Finland to Azov, Ochotsk to Obe,
There's tumult and turmoil on land and on sea;
You'd think all creation was turned upside down —
King Oleg of Russia has lost his gold crown!

They say the King cut off the chancellor's head;
They say the old chamberlain tumbled down dead;
The guards in the palace, in five minutes' space,
Were straight to Siberia sent in disgrace!

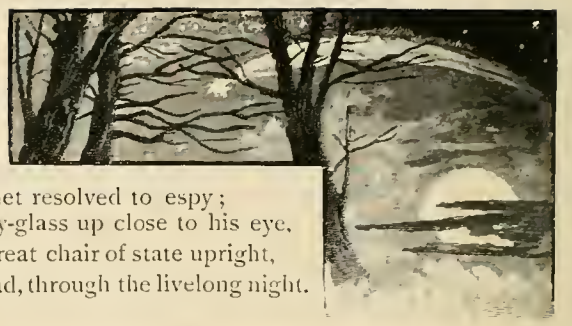
The fault was not theirs; but, if matters go ill,
'Tis certain that some one must foot up the bill;
If kings can't be censured for mischief they've done,
There must be found shoulders to lay it upon!

Did robbers force open the great castle gate?
Did burglars break in and then stealthily wait,
And, spite of stout bars, iron bolts and steel locks,
Bear off from the palace King Oleg's strong box?

Ah, no! Tho' 'tis treason to say it, I fear,
Nor burglar nor midnight marauder came near,
No robber gained entrance. If truth must be told,
King Oleg himself lost the big crown of gold!

A long while ago, on the night of his birth,
Was seen a great comet approaching the earth;
And now, once again, the astrologers wise
Discover strange portents aloft in the skies.

The horoscope old they ponder anew,
They find, past a question, the comet is due
About this same season; and with it, 'tis clear,
Misfortune and trouble must surely appear.



King Oleg this comet resolved to espy;
He held his big spy-glass up close to his eye,
And he sat in his great chair of state upright,
His crown on his head, through the livelong night.

He napped and he nodded; but each time he woke,
Straight out of the window his head he could poke.
—It wasn't so easy to balance that crown!
It seemed ev'ry instant it must topple down,

For each time he twisted his head in the search,
Tho' too sleepy to know it, the crown gave a lurch.
Now crowns, to look stately, should always stand square,
For if not, they give one a scandalous air,

The sensible Queen in her white-ruffled cap
Woke again and again from a warm cosey nap,
"Do take off that big crown, dear Oleg," she said,
"And, too, you would be better off in your bed!

"I never could see why your crown you would wear,
When there's nobody round but just me to care!"
"Because you're a woman; it's quite plain to me:
A king wears his crown for his own dignity!"

* * * * * * * * * *

The wind it was high and the night it was cold,
The King felt the frost through his ermine and gold;
He rubbed his nose smartly, for fear it would freeze,
Then shivered and shook, and then gave a big sneeze!

Ah, fatal that sneeze for the great Russian crown!
It trembled and tottered, and then tumbled down;
It bumped, and it bounced from the wall to the ditch,
And fell at the feet of an old wrinkled witch.

Loud sounded the trumpets; the news through the land
Flew fast, and each courtier in grief wrung his hand.
It was "oh," it was "ah," and they tore at their hair,
While Oleg himself was half-crazed with despair.

They summoned the cunning, the star-gazing men,
In hopes by their wisdom to find it again —
Arabian, Persian, Chaldee and Chinese!
As well, for advice, have consulted the geese!

In throngs they came trooping, North, South, East and West;
Some horoscopes drew, and some quietly guessed.
But each one was round-eyed, and grave as an owl,
And nodded as sagely as that learned fowl.

Quite strange to relate, they at last all agreed,
Then sent to King Oleg their verdict with speed.
To make it more mystic they put it in verse,
And muttered in Sanscrit, "It might have been worse!

"When from an old crone comes again your gold crown,
Though all of your courtiers should grimace and frown,
And though humble the goose-girl by whom it was won,
Right there on the spot she shall marry your son."

She picked up the glittering circlet of gold;
Her big woollen apron in many a fold
She wrapped round her treasure without more delay,
And then, undiscovered, soft trotted away.

The King then commanded the heralds to stand
And blow from each corner the news thro' the land,
That the maids of Russia of every degree,
Might search if they would, all diligently.

"Twas strange how thick goose-girls appeared on each hand!
Old crones, too, for mistresses, came in demand!
Small service they got, when their poor backs were turned —
To hunt for that crown every girl's fingers burned.

"A maiden I'm seeking whose tidy and neat,
To milk and make butter, and cut up my peat,
To dust and to sweep, and to go to the mill,
And care for my geese when I'm busy or ill."

Then Drontha said quickly, "Take me for your maid,
Of hard work I am not in the least afraid."
For Drontha the oracle kept in her mind,
"For perhaps it is *I* who the crown shall find!"

Now Drontha and Dwina were fairest by far,
Of all the goose-girls in the lands of the Czar;
They herded their geese on the common all day,
And snapped their long whips if the geese dared to stray.

Of course they both wondered whom fate would decree
To find the gold crown, and a princess to be.
"I wish some old crone would take me for her maid!"
Sighed Drontha. That instant a voice gruffly said,

One morning the crone waked her maid from her sleep:
"The peat you must cut, you can dust, too, and sweep;
To Novgorod fair I am going to-day,
And mind from the chimney you keep far away."

The old crone had scarcely gone out of her sight,
When Drontha began to poke round, left and right.
At last she climbed up on the high bacon rack,
And found in the chimney a black sheepskin sack.

Then safe in her apron the treasure she hid,
And under her jacket the golden crown slid.
She ran down the pathway that led to the wood,
For close to the forest the King's castle stood.

Right over the pathway a little gate hung,
And backward and forward it ceaselessly swung.
It creaked and it squeaked, and it mournfully sighed,
It moaned and it groaned, and it plaintively cried:

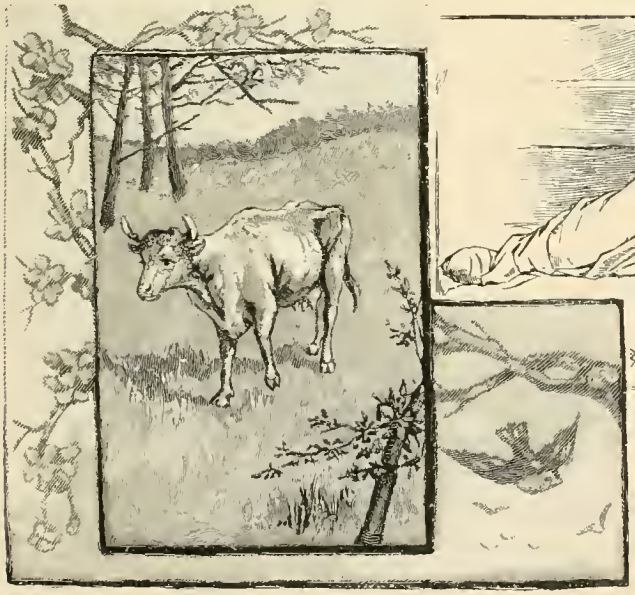
"Please shut me and latch me, I pray, pretty maid,
It hurts my back badly to swing so," it said.
"The Prince I'm to marry, you'll just have to swing,
I can't stop to bother for such a small thing!"

While crossing the meadow, she met the red cow:
"Pray stop, pretty maiden, and please milk me now!"
"I'm in a great hurry," replied the rude maid,
"I can't stop for trifles — the Prince I'm to wed."

As Drontha came near to the foot of the hill,
She heard a low voice from the old water-mill:
"O pray, pretty maiden, just turn my big wheel!
I'm tired of standing here silent and still!".

Then quickly she seized it and quicker jumped down;
She danced high for joy as she felt of the crown;
With fingers that trembled, the knots she untied,
"Yes *I'll* wed Prince Imar!" she eagerly cried.

"Indeed I won't," Drontha then rudely replied;
"For a nap in the hopper, I'm going to hide;
And that is the reason I stopped here to-day —
To marry Prince Imar I'm now on my way."



Then into the hopper she gave a gay leap,
She hid in the corn, and she fell fast asleep.
To dream that she sat like a queen on a throne,
In velvet and jewels that sparkled and shone.

The crone returned home, and at once missed the sack,
And soon started off on the naughty maid's track.
She trotted along till she came to the gate,
That, creaking and moaning, swung early and late.

"O gate o' mine, O gate o' mine,
Say, have you seen that girl o' mine?"

"A rude girl passed an hour ago,
Who left me swinging to and fro."

"That's just my Drontha, the rude, rude maid,
'Twas she, I'm certain," the old crone said.

"O cow o' mine, O cow o' mine,
Say, have you seen that girl o' mine?"

"A rude girl passed an hour ago,
Who wouldn't milk me, that I know."

"That's just my Drontha, the rude, rude maid!
'Twas she, I'm certain," the old crone said.

"O mill o' mine, O mill o' mine,
Say, have you seen that girl o' mine?"

"A girl's in the hopper fast asleep,
Way down in the corn she's buried deep."

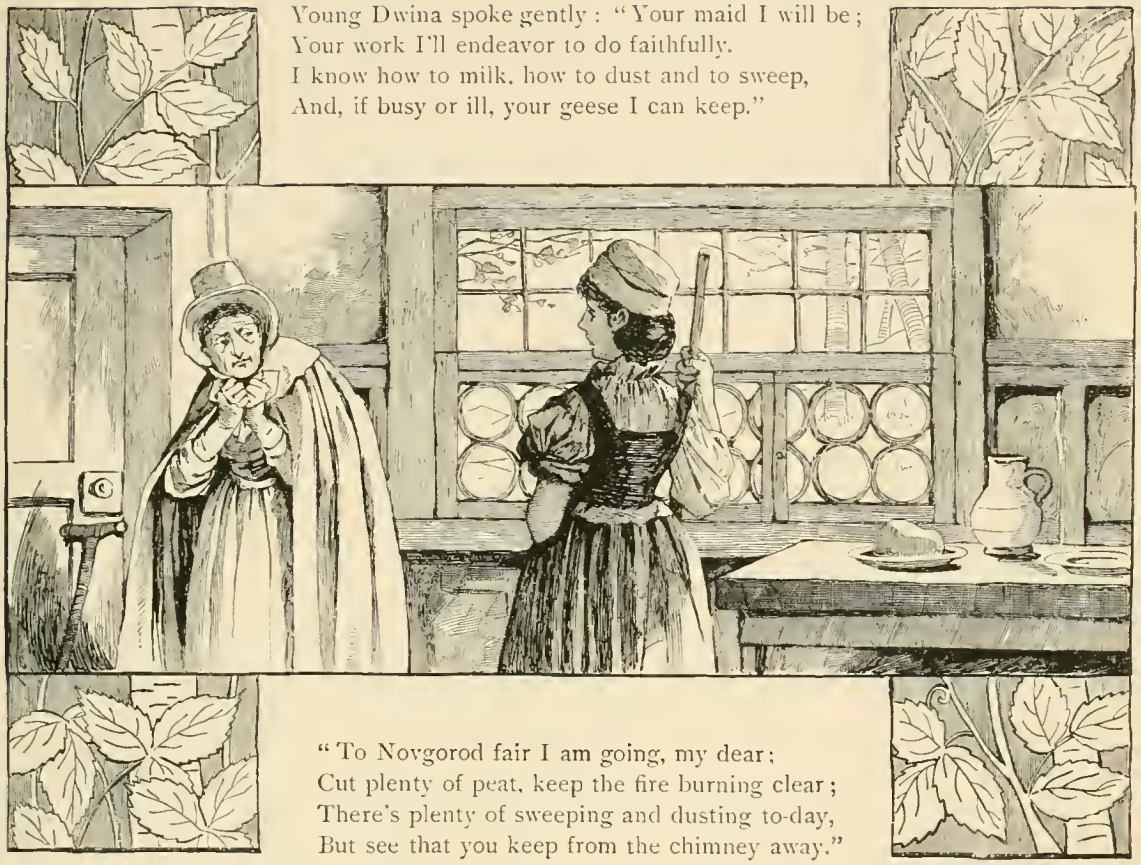
"That's just my Drontha, rude, lazy maid!
'Tis she, I'm certain," the old crone said.

Then out of the hopper the old woman took her;
With all of her might and her main she shook her.
Till Drontha the crown dropped in terror and fright,
And ran without stopping till quite out of sight.

The old woman put the gold crown in the sack,
And hid it again by the high bacon rack;
Then off to the common she went with all speed,
Though sorry was she of a maid to have need.

There Dwina sat knitting and watching her geese.
Her dinner beside her of black bread and cheese,
While round her the geese on one leg stood to rest;
These words to the goose-herd, the old crone addressed:

"A maiden I'm seeking who is tidy and neat,
To milk and make butter, and cut up my peat,
To dust and to sweep, and to go to the mill,
And care for my geese when I'm busy or ill."



Young Dwina spoke gently: "Your maid I will be;
Your work I'll endeavor to do faithfully.
I know how to milk, how to dust and to sweep,
And, if busy or ill, your geese I can keep."

"To Novgorod fair I am going, my dear;
Cut plenty of peat, keep the fire burning clear;
There's plenty of sweeping and dusting to-day,
But see that you keep from the chimney away."

The hut Dwina swept and made everything neat;
She washed up the hearthstones and cut up the peat;
But the fire wouldn't burn, and the smoke filled the hut,
So her broom-stick she took to clear out the soot.

When lo! from the chimney there came tumbling down
A black sheepskin sack with King Oleg's gold crown!
Said Dwina, "This crown to the King ought to go!
My way I can find to the castle, I know!"

She came to the gate that still wearily hung:
"Please latch me. I'm tired, so long have I swung."
"Yes, that I will gladly," the young maiden said.
She latched the gate gently, and then onward sped.

She met on the meadow the poor lowing cow:
"I wish, pretty maiden, you *could* milk me now!"
"Indeed I will gladly," the little maid said.
She filled the big bucket, and then onward she sped.

She came to the brook, where the old water-mill
Huskily said, "Please, to start my big wheel."
"Indeed I will gladly," the little maid said.
She turned the big wheel, and then onward she sped.

The old crone returned, and of course missed the sack.
She looked at the hearth, she examined the rack,
The hut was so tidy, so wholesome and sweet,
She said, "One thing's certain, young Dwina is neat.

"O gate o' mine, O gate o' mine,
Say, have you seen that girl o' mine?"

"Only a lady have I seen,
Who very kind to me has been!"

"Oh, that can never be my little maid,
She's only a goose-girl," the old crone said.

"O cow o' mine, O cow o' mine,
Say, have you seen that girl o' mine?"

"Only a lady have I seen,
Who very kind to me has been!"

"Oh, that can never be my little maid,
She's only a goose-girl," the old crone said.

"O mill o' mine, O mill o' mine,
Say, have you seen that girl o' mine?"

"Only a lady have I seen,
Who very kind to me has been!"

"Oh, that can never be my little maid,
She's only a goose-girl," the old crone said.

She came to the castle, and stood there amazed,
For joy bells were ringing, and bonfires blazed;
Brass bands, too, were playing, and the people who chose,
Were going to court in their best Sunday clothes.

And when the old crone said, "What does this mean?"
They shouted "King Oleg his crown has again!
Prince Imar, young Dwina, the goose-herd, will wed,
For that's what the oracle plainly has said!"

"I'm glad," said the crone, "and I am not surprised
(She was really a fairy quite closely disguised):
Prince Imar no worthier Princess could find,
For Dwina's obliging, neat, courteous and kind."

Her words were the truth, whether fairy or crone;
For of all the Czars that have sat on the throne,
Nor annals, nor legends, before then or since,
Can tell of a happier Princess and Prince.

IX.

LITTLE PEACHLING.

A Japanese Folk-Lore Story.

AT the foot of the Golden Dragon Hill,
Long ages ago, in a snug little house
With a roof of dark-brown, velvety thatch,
There lived an old woodman and his spouse.

One morning, his bill-hook the old man took:
"To the mountain, to cut me a fagot, I'll hie,
While you, O Koyo, the linen can wash
In the river which rushes and gurgles by."

Oh, the merry old man to the mountain hied,
Past young rice-fields in the morning sun,
Toward the dark fir-trees on the mountain side,
Standing forth in its silence, every one.

From wild camelias and white plum-trees,
In his twinkling old eyes the spider-webs swung;
And he merrily brushed by the green bamboos,
With his bill-hook over his shoulder hung.

And a uguisu sang in a tall cherry-tree
As the smiling old wife to the river-side went:
"Oh, red is the sun," she cheerily sang,
As she patiently over her washing bent.

"Oh, red is the sun; and the rice-fields green —
Now what is that in the river I see?
It's the rosiest peach in the whole of Japan;
And it's coming a-floating, a-floating to me.

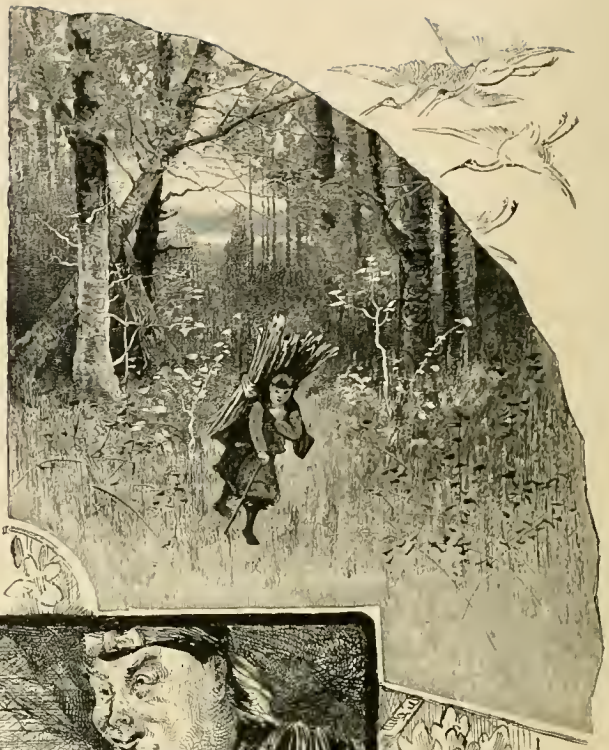
"Now here is a feast for my darling old man,
Oh, the Great Shogun not a finer can get!
Some stewed lily-bulbs, and this beautiful peach,
When he comes from toil, before him I'll set."

Soon down from the mountain the old man came,
And fast on his back his fagot was bound.
"Oh, hasten you, husband," his loving wife cried,
"And taste this beautiful peach that I found!"

But just as he took it the peach split in twain,
And a fat little baby with raven-black hair
Was cradled right in the heart of the peach,
And lay a-twinkling and blinking there.

"Oh you brave little boy, you shall be our own son;
And Momotaro shall have for a name,
Or Little Peachling, since out of a peach,
You dear little fellow, this morning you came."

The rice-fields blossomed for twenty more years,
While the gurgling old river amongst them ran;
For twenty more years grew the slim bamboo,
And Little Peachling was grown to a man.



"Some millet-dumplings pray make for me,"
To his good foster-mother he said one day,
"And off to the ogres' castle I'll go,
And the whole of their treasure will bring away.

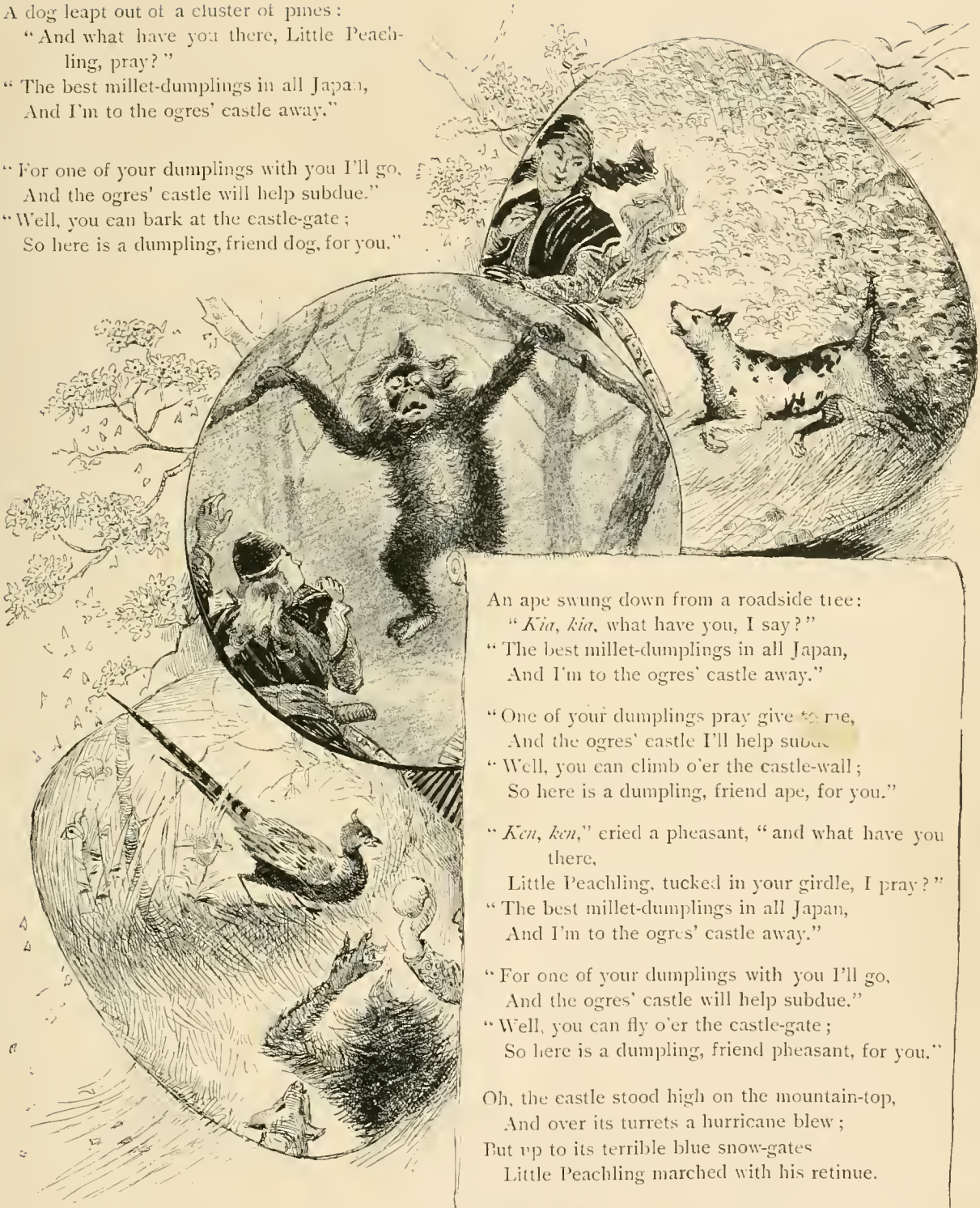
"As thick in the ogres' treasure-vaults
The jewels are lying as sea-shore sands;
With blue snow-gates on the mountain-top,
The ogres' castle all proudly stands—

"With blue snow-gates that are stronger than steel;
But I will enter, and will bring to you
The wealth from the ogres' treasure-vaults,
Hung over with pearls, like flowers with dew."

"I have made you the dumplings," his good mother said,
"But I fear lest the ogres should do you a harm."
But the Little Peachling danced gayly away,
With the millet-dumplings under his arm.

A dog leapt out of a cluster of pines:
"And what have you there, Little Peachling, pray?"
"The best millet-dumplings in all Japan,
And I'm to the ogres' castle away."

"For one of your dumplings with you I'll go,
And the ogres' castle will help subdue."
"Well, you can bark at the castle-gate;
So here is a dumpling, friend dog, for you."



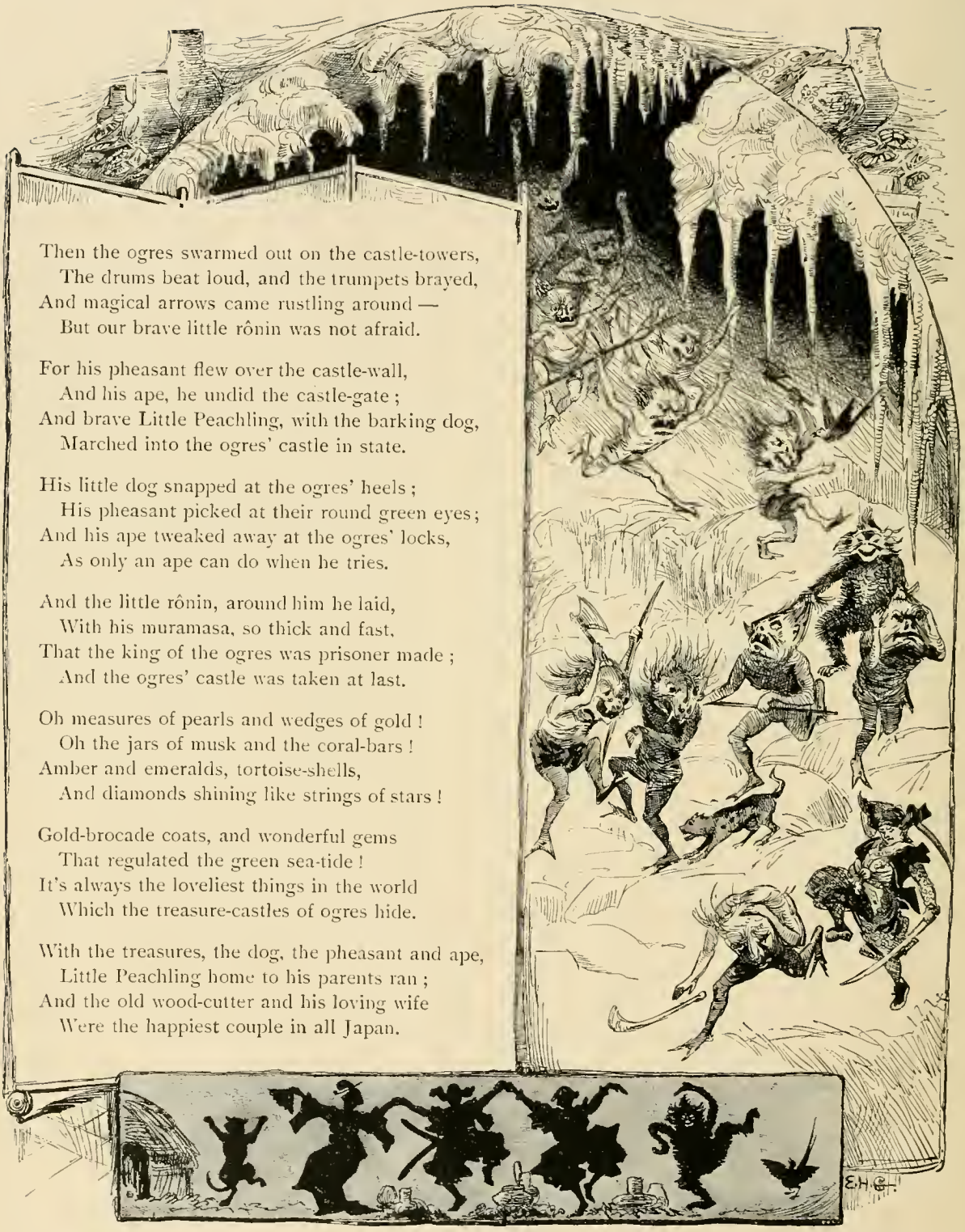
An ape swung down from a roadside tree:
"*Kia, kia*, what have you, I say?"
"The best millet-dumplings in all Japan,
And I'm to the ogres' castle away."

"One of your dumplings pray give to me,
And the ogres' castle I'll help subdue."
"Well, you can climb o'er the castle-wall;
So here is a dumpling, friend ape, for you."

"*Ken, ken*," cried a pheasant, "and what have you there,
Little Peachling, tucked in your girdle, I pray?"
"The best millet-dumplings in all Japan,
And I'm to the ogres' castle away."

"For one of your dumplings with you I'll go,
And the ogres' castle will help subdue."
"Well, you can fly o'er the castle-gate;
So here is a dumpling, friend pheasant, for you."

Oh, the castle stood high on the mountain-top,
And over its turrets a hurricane blew;
But up to its terrible blue snow-gates
Little Peachling marched with his retinue.



Then the ogres swarmed out on the castle-towers,
The drums beat loud, and the trumpets brayed,
And magical arrows came rustling around —
But our brave little rônin was not afraid.

For his pheasant flew over the castle-wall,
And his ape, he undid the castle-gate;
And brave Little Peachling, with the barking dog,
Marched into the ogres' castle in state.

His little dog snapped at the ogres' heels;
His pheasant picked at their round green eyes;
And his ape tweaked away at the ogres' locks,
As only an ape can do when he tries.

And the little rônin, around him he laid,
With his muramasa, so thick and fast,
That the king of the ogres was prisoner made;
And the ogres' castle was taken at last.

Oh measures of pearls and wedges of gold!
Oh the jars of musk and the coral-bars!
Amber and emeralds, tortoise-shells,
And diamonds shining like strings of stars!

Gold-brocade coats, and wonderful gems
That regulated the green sea-tide!
It's always the loveliest things in the world
Which the treasure-castles of ogres hide.

With the treasures, the dog, the pheasant and ape,
Little Peachling home to his parents ran;
And the old wood-cutter and his loving wife
Were the happiest couple in all Japan.

X.

THE FAIRY FLAG.

An Isle of Skye Folk-Tale.

THE FAIRY FLAG.

(*A Skye Folk-lore Story.*)

By Mary E. Wilkins.

BEYOND the purple gloom of moors,
Beyond the blueness of the sea,
Beyond the range of chalk-white cliffs,
The sun was setting peacefully.

The fairy, on a grassy knoll,
Sat dreaming, singing to the cows:
"*Knee-deep in clumps of plumy ferns,*
Knee-deep in rustling grasses browse!

"*The chieftain slays his foeman's clan,*
The lady 'broiders in the hall:
I sit here singing to the cows,
And am the gayest one of all!

"*Now of the clumps of spicy fern,*
Now of the juicy grasses taste!"
The fairy wore a grass-green gown,
With golden girdle at her waist;

Her winsome little face upturned,
Her soft gold hair all round her streamed;
Her small pink cheeks like roses burned,
Her wild blue eyes like jewels beamed.

She struck a little harp o' pearl,
As to the browsing kine she sung:
All lightly o'er the fairy bridge
Beyond, a bonnie laddie sprung.

He had Prince Charlie's yellow locks,
His gay blue eyes and lovesome way:
Macleod's little son he was —
The castle just beyond him lay.

The fairy lilted loud and sweet,
The laddie turned him round to see;
She lifted up her little face,
And sweet, and sweet, and sweet, smiled she.

The laddie thro' the heather ran,
  His tartan blowing out behind,
The little fairy, gowned in green,
  Wi' little harp o' pearl, to find.

"And since you are a mortal bairn,
  And yet have shunned me not," she said,
"A fairy gift I'll give to thee,
  To-morrow, when the west is red.

"And since you have a bonny face,
  I'll give to thee a fairy kiss,
To take the bitter from thy woe,
  And add a sweetness to thy bliss."

She kissed the laddie's blushing cheek,
  And all the air grew sweet around,
As if a million flowers bloomed out —
  And than she vanished from the ground.

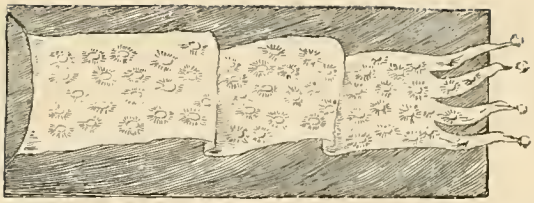
The western sky all roses was,
  And round "Macleod's Maiden's" feet
Foam-wreaths to wreaths of roses turned.
  The fairy lilted loud and sweet;

The laddie o'er the fairy bridge,
  Came running lightly to her side:
"And have you brought the fairy gift
  You promised me last night?" he cried.

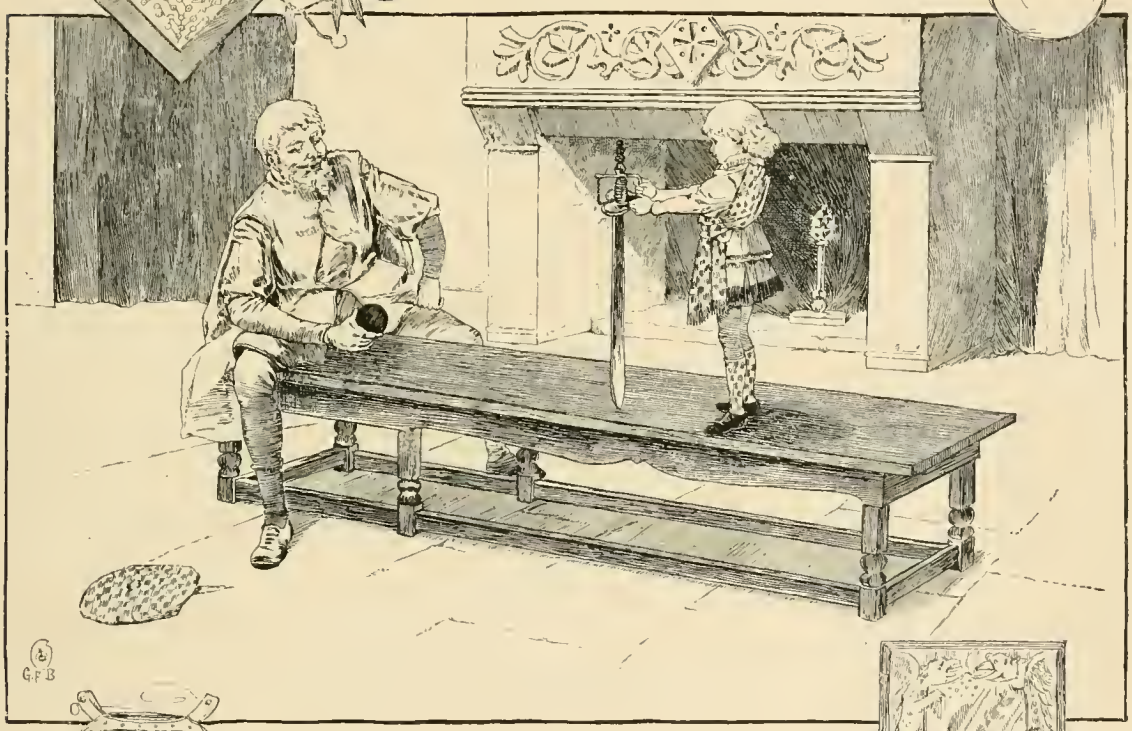
The flag was green as springtide sward
  What time the sun upon it lies,
And shot with threads of glittering gold,
  And filled with spots of gold, like eyes.

She put it in the laddie's hand:
  "Once waved, 'twill bring thee thy desire,
And twice, and thrice — but not again;
  Then cast it, worthless, in the fire!"

A shadow o'er her gown o' green,
A shadow o'er her winsome face,
A shadow o'er her golden hair,
Came softly creeping on apace.



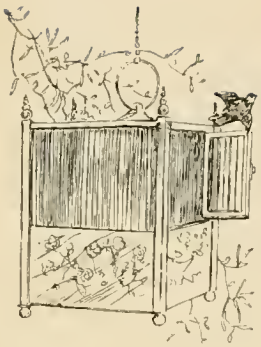
The fairy through the shadow shone,
And struck her little harp o' pearl;
Then vanished in the shadow's heart,
Wi' golden and wi' rosy swirl.



The laddie held the fairy flag,
Alone in twilight gray and cold;
And stood and looked, his wond'ring eyes
All filled with dancing motes of gold.

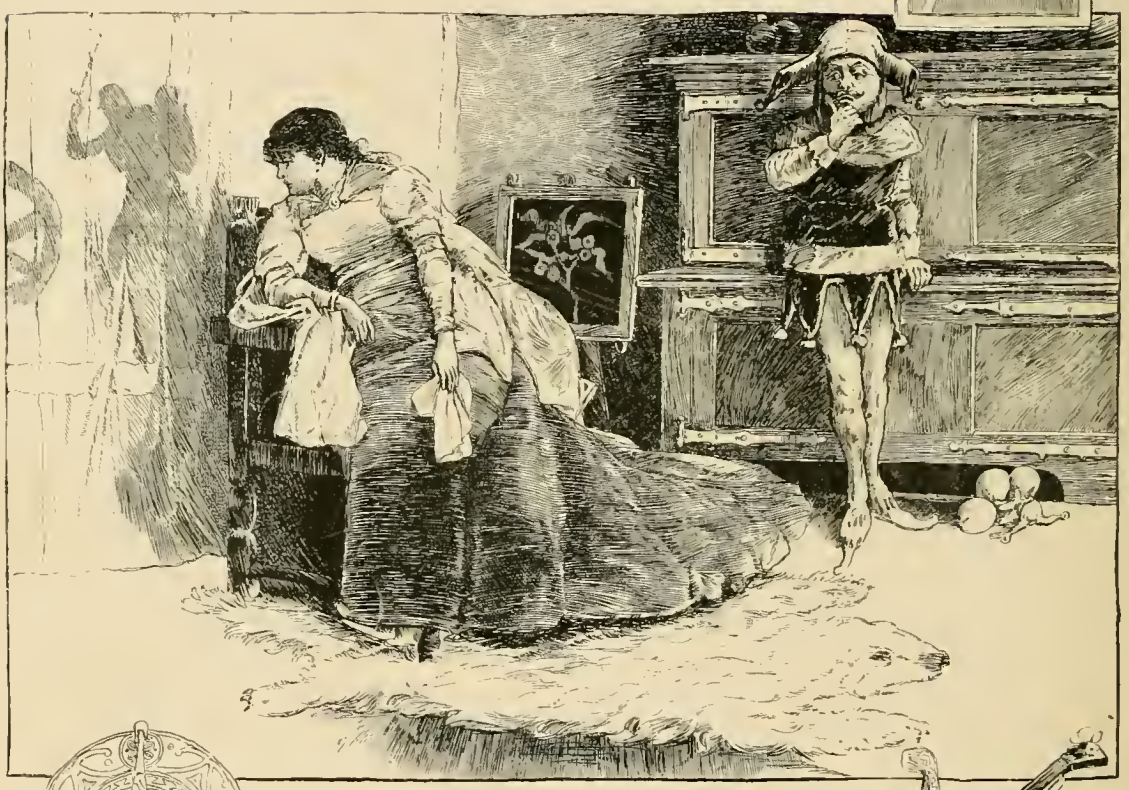
The laddie's yellow beard had grown;
He'd wedded with a lady fair;
And he had got a little son,
With his same bonnie yellow hair.

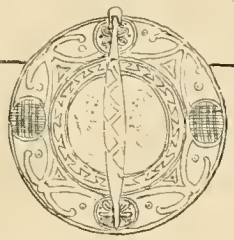
And alway had the fairy's kiss,
She gave to him so long ago,
Added a sweetness to his bliss,
And ta'en the bitter from his woe.



But never yet the fairy flag
Had waved upon the castle wall;
For with his stalwart arm and sword,
His troubles he had breasted all.

"Oh, where's my little laddie gone?"
The lady left her 'broidery frame;
Through every castle window peered,
With tearful eyes, the gentle dame.



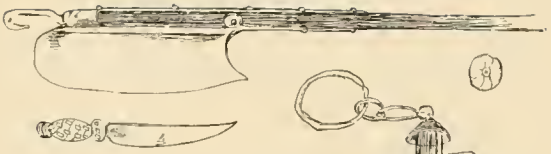


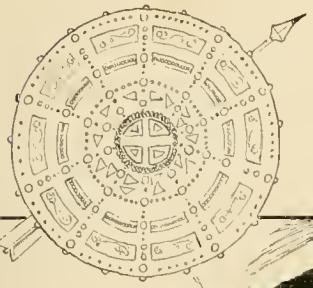
Macleod called his followers out,
And loud the castle trumpets blew:
"Macleod's heir is strayed awa',
And on the heather falls the dew.

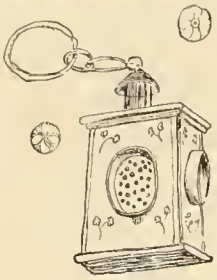
"And on the heather falls the dew;
Shadows are floating o'er the sea.
Oh, where's my little laddie gone? —
I pray ye bring him back to me!"

They searched along the chalk-white cliffs,
Upon the dizzy hanging paths;
They sought him on their breezy tops.
Along the strips of grassy straths.

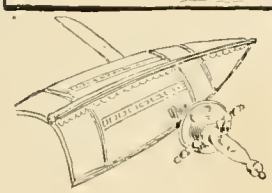
They called "Macleod" down the hill;
They called "Macleod" down the vale,
They hailed the shepherd with his flock,
The maiden with her milking-pail.



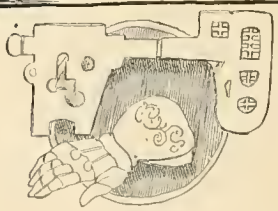




They searched Dunvergan castle thro';
Each dungeon in the thick stone wall
They peered in — but they only found
The prisoned foemen, grim and tall.



His mother looked out o'er the sea,
To where "Macleod's Maidens" stand,
To see, above the foam-wreaths, rise
His yellow head and waving hand.



The laddie came not; and the moon
With all the stars sailed out in sight;
"Macleod's Tables," tops of snow,
Were cloth of silver in her light.

"Bring out, bring out the fairy flag!
I'll wave it from the topmost tower!
There'll come no direr need than this —
Macleod's race has lost its flower!"

Macleod waved the fairy flag;
It looked a net of golden wire;
Its streaks of gold and spots of gold,
All linked and curled like tongues of fire.

There came a twang o' pearlie harp,
There came a lilting loud and sweet;
And softly o'er the fairy bridge
There came the dance o' slender feet.

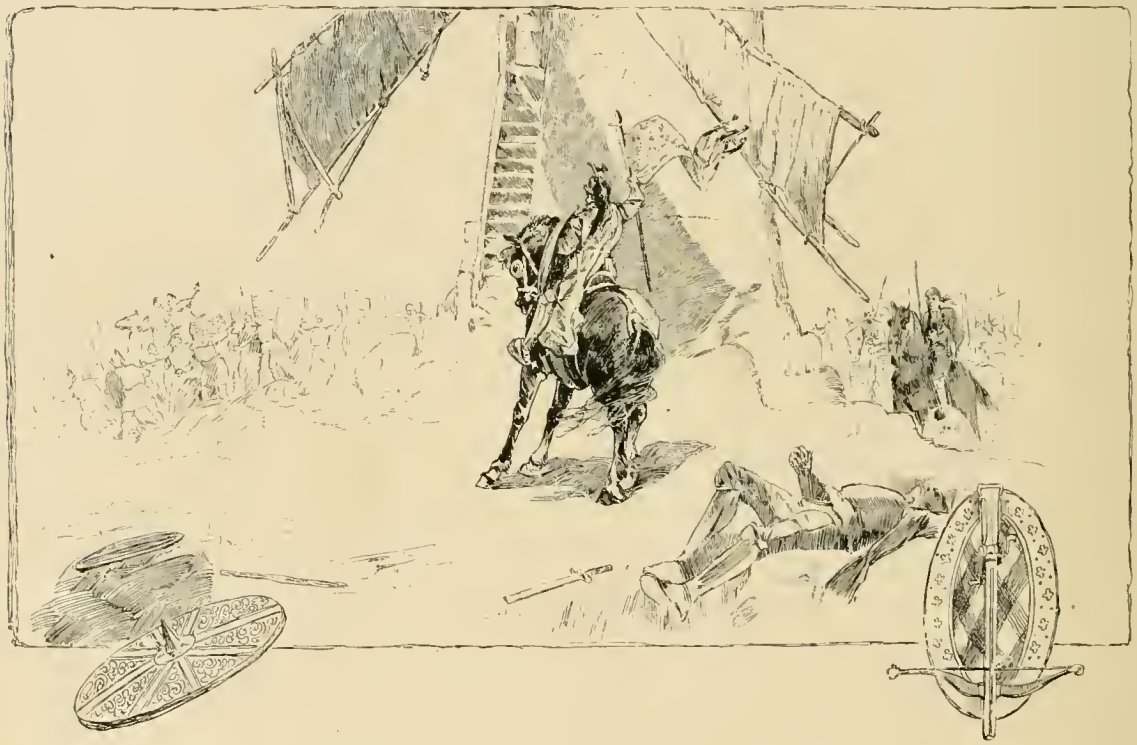
There danced along the fairy bridge
A spot i' the golden light apace:
The laddie at the castle gate
Stood lifting up his bonnie face.

"Oh, I ha' wandered by the burn,
And I ha' wandered by the glen;
A little leddy all in green,"
He said, "has led me home again."

Macleod furled the fairy flag:
"Ye've served me once in blessed stead —
But sorely I'll be pressed again
Ere I will wave ye twice!" he said.

All day the chief had held the field,
Nor quailed until the sun sank low;
His followers, bleeding, round him lay,
And he was hemmed in by the foe.

"Oh, life is sweet!" Macleod thought
"I love my bairn and lady dear:
I'll wave again the fairy flag —
Oh, will it bring me succor here!"



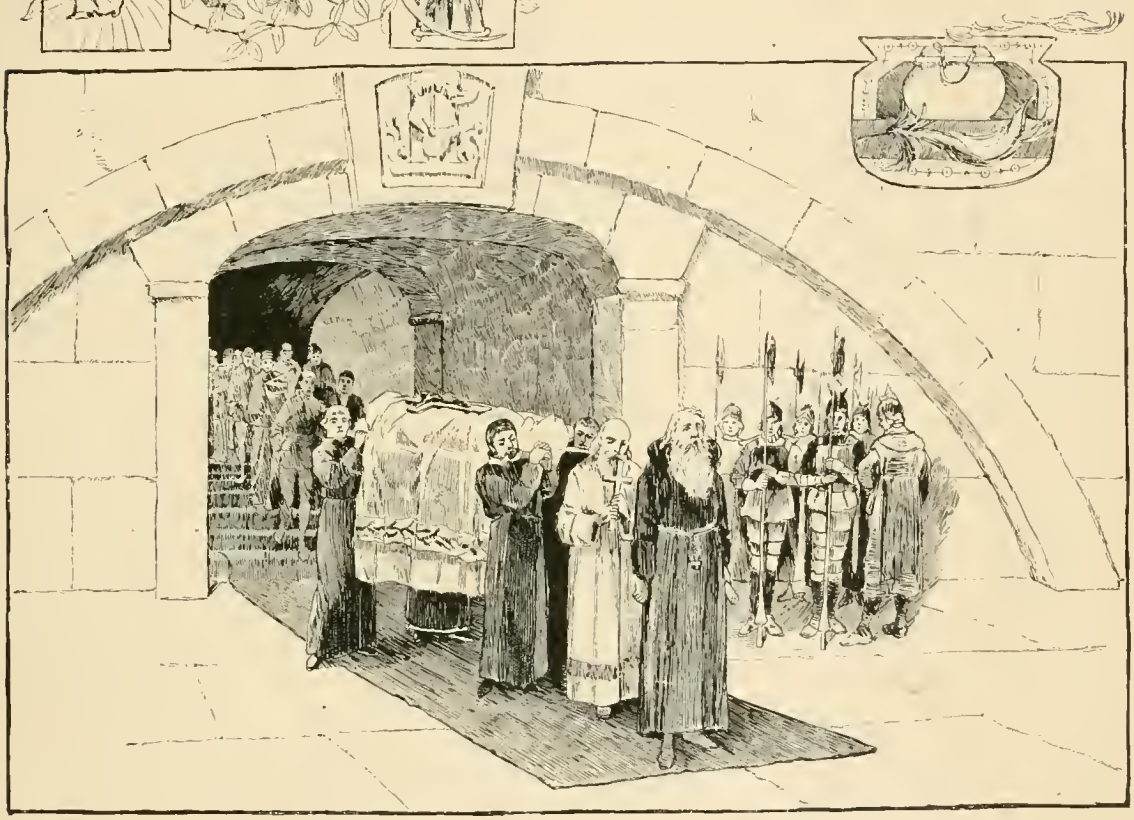
Macleod waved the fairy flag —
His foemen reeled back at the sight;
For in their cruel eyes there danced
Great spots and bars of golden light.

There came a twang o' pearlie harp,
There came a lilting loud and sweet:
Macleod's foemen turned and fled,
The hills all rang with flying feet.

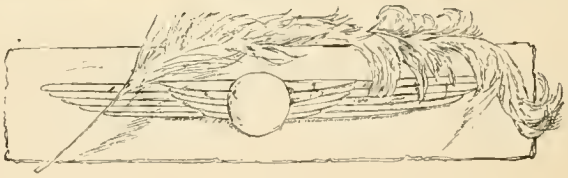
Macleod furled the fairy flag:
"Ye've served me twice in blessed stead —
But I shall in the churchyard lie
Ere I will wave ye thrice!" he said.

The hand that waved the fairy flag,
The lips the fairy kissed, are still:
Macleod in the churchyard lies,
And deaf to lilting sweet and shrill.

But still his kin in misty Skye
The fairy flag in keeping hold;
And sometime from the castle wall
May flash its spots and bars of gold.



"For if I thrice should wave the flag,
And thrice should get my heart's desire;
Next day might come a sorer need,
When it was ashes in the fire."



Macleod kept his word: he fought
For life on many a bloody plain,
He tossed in peril on the sea.
Nor waved the fairy flag again.

But dire indeed shall be the need,
And every other hope be slain,
Ere a Macleod of the Isle
Shall wave the fairy flag again.

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